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22 June 2011

Mrs N Shaw
Osborne Nursery School
Station Road
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Dear Mrs Shaw

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Osborne Nursery School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 21 June 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I would also like to thank the members of the governing body who helped contribute to the inspection.

Since the last inspection, the headteacher was absent for two months because of issues that needed to be resolved following diagnosis of her visual impairment.

As a result of the inspection on 22–23 March 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter. Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that, at this time, the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The previous inspection judged overall effectiveness to be satisfactory, even though there was good provision for learning and all groups of children made good progress. This was because relationships between staff were reported as being strained, adversely affecting communication and, as a consequence, having a detrimental effect on the climate for sustained improvement. In order to improve matters, a clear plan for staff development has been implemented. This included a two-day focus on team working, designed by an independent consultant, and staff interviews conducted by a local authority adviser. Through these, and a range of other actions, all staff have had the opportunity to air their views and have a shared understanding of each other's roles. Nonetheless, the headteacher and some of the staff continue to have conflicting expectations.



The school has made good progress in improving the effectiveness of the governing body. There is a new Chair of the Governing Body and, following a recruitment drive, there are now no vacancies on the governing body. Meetings are held regularly and are well attended. The minutes of these meetings show clearly that the governing body is becoming increasingly well informed and is beginning to hold the school to account as it discusses a wide range of issues. It is also more active in monitoring the school's work. Reports from governors' visits are shared and discussed.

Children continue to make good progress because they are taught well. They make particularly good progress in their personal and social development. They share resources amicably, respect others and behave well. They have an increasing understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Children benefit from the good opportunities for them to develop early skills as readers and writers, for instance by 'writing' the appointments made as they role play work as secretaries in an office. However, opportunities to develop children's language skills are frequently missed because adults, keen to involve children in discussions, readily accept their responses while overlooking poor speech patterns and incorrect sentence structure or grammar. Adults have a good understanding of how young children learn. All areas of learning are covered well. There is a good balance between opportunities for children to make choices and learn through play and direct teaching, both indoors and out. The outdoor learning environment is extremely well planned and provides excellent opportunities for children to investigate and explore. All adults place a strong emphasis on ensuring the welfare and safety of the children. There are clear systems to ensure that planning is adjusted in response to what adults learn through their observations of children at work. However, the written assessments that are made are inconsistent. They are sometimes too descriptive, lack detailed evaluation of precisely how well the children tackle their tasks, and make too few suggestions about the next steps in learning. Targets are displayed clearly, and adults make regular checks on children's progress in meeting them.

The local authority provided useful support for the school in helping it to recruit governors and in working to improve staff relationships. However, it has been less influential in recent months as a result of cutbacks in local services.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mike Thompson
Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2010

- Boost the school's capacity for sustaining improvement by:
 - developing the skills of the governing body so that it can help shape the strategic direction of the school and provide better support and challenge
 - enhancing the quality of working relationships at all levels.

- Ensure that assessment information is used more effectively to plan the next steps of learning for individuals and make certain that better use is made of pupils' individual targets.